

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Pingree Microwave Radio Station

Project No.: TEP-P00670

Project Manager: Vincent C. Majors, TEP-CSB-2

Location: Bingham County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to construct a microwave radio station on fee-owned property in Bingham County, Idaho. The radio station would occupy about 2 acres and would include a 20-foot x 60-foot one-story building, a 200-foot tall radio tower, a 2000 gallon propane tank and propane generator, a cyclone fence enclosing the facilities, and two gates for ingress/egress to the yard from Bingham County Road. The radio tower base would be 40 feet x 40 feet. The fenced yard would be 300 feet x 250 feet and would allow for the construction of an additional radio building and tower at a later time if needed. Electrical service to the site would be designed and installed by Idaho Power and Light and would originate from existing distribution lines that run parallel to the site along the county road.

This microwave radio station is the 3rd of 4 sites in the radio path between Albion Butte (near Burley, ID) and Thunder Ridge (east of Idaho Falls, ID). This path would allow BPA staff direct access to operational traffic without having to use external companies for telecommunications services. It would allow transmission system monitoring and remote troubleshooting of equipment before maintenance crews are dispatched from the District Office. Ultimately, it would increase the reliability and security of both the communication and transmission system.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Chad Hamel For

Nancy A. Wittpenn

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason or

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 29, 2018

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Pingree Microwave Radio Station

Project Site Description

The radio station would be built on a flat, shrub scrub/grassy lot, adjacent to Bingham County Road and surrounded by agricultural fields in Bingham County, southeast Idaho. Idaho Power and Light’s Pingree Substation is across the street. The site contains some rocks and the remnants of an old cabin or shed.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA received concurrence with its no adverse effect determination from the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office on 5/14/2018; no responses were received from other entities consulted—Shoshone Bannock Tribe of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Geotechnical investigations would be completed before construction to determine exact site conditions and engineering requirements for equipment footings. BMP’s would be used to minimize erosion and keep soil from moving off-site.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species or habitat is present in or around the site. Reseeding with a site-specific native seed mix would occur at the appropriate time after construction is complete.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special –status species or habitat is present in or around the site.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No water, floodplains, or fish are present in or around the site.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No wetlands are present in or around the site.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: Groundwater and aquifers are not obviously present in or around the site. Geotechnical investigations would be completed before construction to determine exact site conditions and engineering requirements for equipment footings.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation: Although this site is zoned for agricultural use, communications facilities are an allowed use with a conditional use permit. The site is not a specially-designated area.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The site is across the street from Idaho Power and Light's Pingree Substation and generally surrounded by private and commercial agricultural land uses. It would not be out of character with these surrounding uses.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions would be generated during construction but would be temporary and localized.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Elevated noise levels during construction during daylight hours would occur but would be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: During construction, all safety requirements would be followed. Appropriate emergency spill response materials would be maintained on-site as required to control unexpected and unanticipated releases of petroleum-based products or other hazardous materials. Disposal of any spill material would be in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements. Impacts to human health and safety are not expected.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA owns the property and adjacent landowners have been notified of plans to construct the radio station.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Chad Hamel For
Nancy A. Wittpenn
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: May 29, 2018